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Promoting the Culture of Health Through a Girls Summer Health Camp Intervention

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Purpose: Promoting the culture of health among all populations, including children and adolescents, is one of the national preventive strategies recommended by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).¹ Some of the most serious precursors to health problems affecting the population of the United States are obesity, depression, and unintended pregnancy.²⁻⁸ The health consequences of these mostly preventable conditions will hinder individuals, families, and communities from living long and healthy lives now and for generations to come. Health Education and Leadership Training for a Hopeful future (HEALTH) camp initiative is a health promotion program designed for young people ages 9-15 years from low socioeconomic and diverse racial backgrounds. The camp introduced basic health concepts related to nutrition, exercise, reproductive health, cardiovascular health, maintaining mental health – self-esteem, mindfulness and team building, introduction to the health professions, healthy behaviors and communities, and social determinants of health. The main goal of this camp is to equip young people with knowledge and leadership skills that will help them desire and model how to live a healthy life. A secondary goal is to introduce the roles of health professionals including nurses, physicians and other health disciplines as possible career paths.

Methods: This is a simple descriptive pre- and post-assessments survey used to determine the impact of the summer 2019 HEALTH camp intervention on girl's mindset about living a healthy lifestyle. The RWJF Culture of Health Action Framework to improve population health, well-being, and equity guided this program. The first Action is to make health a shared value by creating a mindset and expectations that value health promotion and well-being.¹ Preventive efforts need to focus on introducing the culture of health from a very early age and reinforcing these discussions over a lifetime. There were two one-week health promotion day camps. Ninety-one girls participated in the post-camp surveys. There were 49 girls (9 – 11 years) in week 1, and 42 girls (12-15 years) in week 2.

Results: There were 54 girls ages 9 – 11 years (week 1), and 45 girls ages 12-15 years (week 2) who participated in the post-camp surveys. In both weeks, the girls agreed or strongly agreed that they were overall satisfied with the camp (85.2% week 1; 84.4%-week 2) and had lots of fun at this camp (90.4% week 1; 84.4%-week 2). The girls also agreed or strongly agreed that they learned a lot about how to stay healthy (85.2% week 1; 82.2%-week 2), nutrition and eating healthy (90.8% week 1; 84.4%-week 2), keeping their body healthy (90.8% week 1; 82.2%-week 2), about things that could affect their health (90.6% week 1; 84.5%-week 2), keeping their mind healthy (85.2% week 1; 71.1%-week 2), about female reproductive system, (87.1% week 1; 77.8%-

week 2), and heart health and the cardiovascular system (79.2% week 1; 71.1%-week 2).

Conclusion: An opportunity to teach young people about basic health concepts and introduce them to the activities of various health professions during a summer health camp is able to create and reinforce a mindset that values health and well-being.

Title:

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Keywords:

Adolescent health, Culture of health and Health promotion

Abstract Summary:

This session is about a summer HEALTH camp intervention to promote the culture of health among young racially and socioeconomically diverse girls aged 9 to 15 years. The camp introduced basic health concepts related to nutrition, exercise, reproductive health, cardiovascular health, mental health, and promotion of healthy behaviors and communities,

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